



PRESS RELEASE FROM CONGRESSMAN KEVIN BRADY

Eighth District, Texas

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Dominican Republic Joins Central American Nations in Free Trade Deal with U.S.

Houston Region Gains 2,000 Jobs First Year; 10,000 Jobs Over Decade

Houston, TX – U.S. Congressman Kevin Brady (R-The Woodlands) applauded the addition of the Dominican Republic to the already negotiated Central America Free Trade Agreement, a move made official today at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. between United States Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick, Dominican Republic Secretary for Commerce and Industry Sonia Guzman, and trade ministers from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The agreement among the seven countries will be known as the United States-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement or DR-CAFTA for short.

“Adding the Dominican Republic to the Central America Free Trade Agreement further strengthens an already strong trade agreement. Texas agricultural, computer, chemical, and a host of other products are going to gain unlimited access to new markets. Our farmers, businesses, and entrepreneurs are looking at close to \$769 million in new sales in just the first year,” said Brady, who as a member of the Ways and Means Committee, is spearheading Congressional support for the agreement.

The 45 million citizens of Central America and the Dominican Republic purchase more U.S. goods than the citizens of India, Indonesia, and Russia - combined.

Texas will see 4,000 new jobs the first year the trade pact is in place according to preliminary estimates from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Over the next decade, the job estimate swells to over 40,000 new jobs. Analysts also predict that Houston will land half of all projected Texas jobs in the first year and 10,000 over the next decade.

Because the United States -- Dominican Republic -- Central America Free Trade Agreement represents new opportunities and prosperity for the United States, Central America and the Dominican Republic, Congressman Brady is hopeful that President Bush will submit this historic agreement to Congress for approval at the earliest possible opportunity.

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